



A conference of
Mennonite Church USA

Reporter

**KNOWING
CHRIST'S LOVE
— ANSWERING
GOD'S CALL**

NOVEMBER 2012

Madison celebrates 25 years

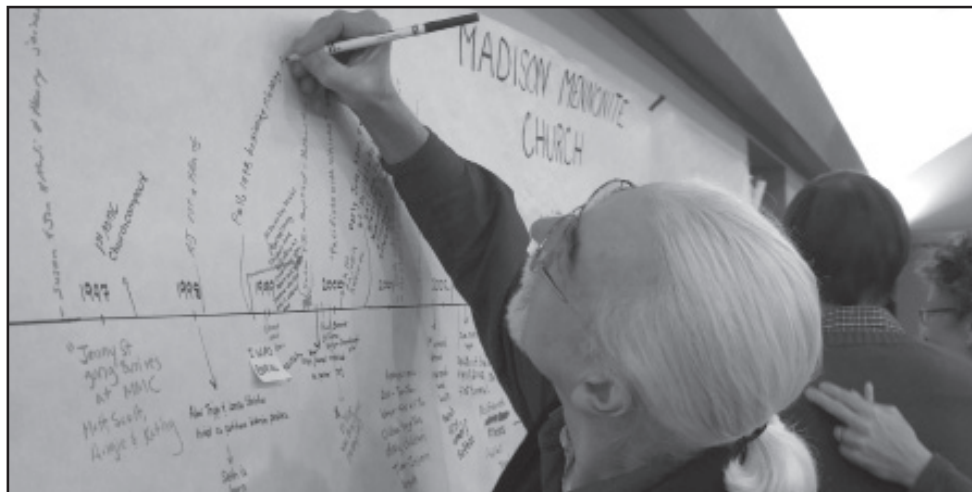
Madison Mennonite Church celebrated its 25th anniversary on Nov. 11. During the worship the congregation sang some of the church's favorite hymns, including "God's Family," which was sung at the end of each worship service during its early years.

One of the founding members shared a historical sketch of the church and a slide show of church events was presented. A potluck lunch followed worship. A time line was created on a large white roll of paper and members were encouraged to enter significant events in the life of the congregation.

Focus on the Dead Sea Scrolls

John Kampen will lead a discussion on the Dead Sea Scrolls for Adult Education sessions at Cincinnati Fellowship on Dec. 9 and 16.

This is in preparation for an exhibit of the Scrolls this winter at the Cincinnati Museum Center.



Member placing item on the Madison time line

Reign of God grants continue

Central District Conference's Missional Church Committee awarded two new joint missional initiatives this fall.

The grants encourage and resource congregations partnering with other congregations in new, joint missional initiatives. The new initiatives are: "Walk a Mile in my Shoes," a cooperative event planned by Hively Avenue and Community Mennonite, Markham, with participation by Church Without Walls, Elkhart, Ind. The three congregations are racially diverse to varying degrees.

The congregations will be getting to know and appreciate each other better by hearing each other's stories, participating in a community walk, and worshipping together.

The event will take place at Community Mennonite. The other two congregations will travel together to and from Elkhart to Markham.

Madison Mennonite and First, Bluffton, will join together in an ongoing peace education project. The congregations will help create a picture book for children. The book will tell the story of how John P. Klassen, a young art teacher living in Ukraine in the 1920s, gathered up bullets from the ground of his village (and dug them out of the walls of houses) and melted them down to create a medallion.

The medallion was given to Mennonite Central Committee in North America, which had sent food and relief supplies to persons in Ukraine who were suffering and

By Roger Nafziger, CDC treasurer

“It was so easy once...”

There is a Carly Simon song from the 1970s that contained the line “It was so easy once....” That line might be used to describe funding for the Mennonite Church USA area conferences. In past years, congregations generously supported the work of their conference staff and ministers and there was no need for the conferences to seek funding from any other sources.

In the 21st century, the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA, MC USA agencies and almost all MC USA area conferences find themselves stretched to continue to fund all the services and programs

they provide, many times with staffing levels significantly reduced from where they were just 10 years ago when MC USA was formed. Our conference, Central District Conference, is no exception. Giving from congregations continues to decline and congregations often shift their giving outside the congregation to more local causes and mission outreach.

One possible solution to this area conference funding shortfall is for the conferences to hire additional staff (adding to the staffing cost for the conference) who will concentrate their efforts

in development and fundraising for the conference. Many years ago the Mennonite colleges, universities and seminaries saw a

need to add staff to provide these functions and today, the annual and the deferred/estate gifts given to Bluffton University, Goshen College and the other Mennonite higher education institutions are critical for them to meet their annual budgetary needs, to grow and to thrive on into the future.

In the last report from the MC USA Executive Board printed in a recent issue of *Mennonite World Review* and *The Mennonite*, the board heard from development experts about how the executive board might try to enhance their revenue stream by adding development staff. Will Central District Conference need to do the same? Will congregants in CDC churches be approached by yet another development officer seeking support for CDC?

Perhaps this is inevitable, but if CDC congregations understand and place a high value on what the conference does for their congregation and try diligently to increase their regular funding of the conference, even modestly, the CDC board will not need to seek additional funding. As the new treasurer for CDC, who just came through my first board meetings, I am impressed and inspired by the work of the conference and our two gifted staff, Lois and Emma. If you, too, are favorably impressed with the work of the conference, would you be willing to advocate for increased funding from your congregation? Please consider it. And share your ideas and concerns with me.

Roger A. Nafziger
CDC treasurer
Eighth Street Mennonite Church
Goshen, Indiana



Hively members set three goals during retreat

Hively Avenue's fall congregational retreat set a direction for the congregation for 2012-13.

"The retreat theme verse, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,' (Psalm 119:112), guides the congregation as a community of faith seeking to understand God's will for us today," said Charles Geiser, pastor.

The congregation hopes to make its goals of the year based on a more conscious focus on scripture, Biblical literacy and articulation of the congregation's beliefs.

These areas will be incorporated in various ways through the work of the commissions and Leadership Council.



A reading at Hively's fall retreat involved adults Greg and Beth Suderman, and youth Valeria Rosales, Lara and Rachelle Claassen.

Reign of God grants - from page 1

starving as a result of the civil war there. This is a modern-day 'swords to plowshares' story.

Lisa Weaver has written the text of the story. The grant will be used to fund an illustrator for the story.

Other CDC congregations are invited to learn about the Reign of God grants. Information can be found by contacting the Central District office.



Salem's 124th annual auction

Joy Clemens, Caitlyn Daniels and Amara Horner are eager to shop at the Helping Hands Harvestore for children only.

The new venue was added to the 124th annual Thanksgiving Day Praise Service and Auction held Nov. 22 at Salem Menno-nite. Proceeds from the auction aid several Salem families, local service organizations and international relief projects.

First, Bluffton, holds "chairity" fundraiser

First, Bluffton, held a "Hymnal Celebration/Chairity Event" at the church on Nov. 11.

It was an evening of music presented by a variety of groups, including its adult choir, children's choir, bell choir and singing by the congregation.

All works performed were from the "Hymnal: A Worship Book."

The event served two purposes: as a fundraiser for new choir chairs, and as a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the hymnal.

Marilyn Kern, a member of the congregation, was one of the members of the 1992 hymnal project committee.

An offering at the service went toward new choir chairs. Members of the choirs provided dessert following the program.



Members of the Normal congregation lead a discussion during the peace forum. From left, John Bertsche, Meredith Schroeder, Philip Dick and Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach.

Oct. 13-14 at Mennonite Church of Normal

“Helpless to hopeful” peace forum theme

“Helpless to hopeful: make a difference through faithful peacemaking,” was theme of a regional peace forum held at the Mennonite Church of Normal Oct. 13-14 for members of surrounding Mennonite congregations and community members. Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, director of MCC’s Washington D.C. office, was the featured speaker.

In the Saturday afternoon workshop, Lyndaker Schlabach discussed the advocacy work that MCC does through its Washington, D.C. office as well as providing tools and tactics for advocating on the local level.

According to Lyndaker Schlabach, this year the United States’ military budget is estimated to be \$650 billion, slightly less than the military budgets of the rest of the world combined. With the nation facing a trillion dollar budget deficit, legislators previously unwilling to cut the military budget are now considering this budget item as a place for savings. She sees this as an opportunity for Mennonites to advocate an issue that for them isn’t just a budget issue – it’s an ethical one.

Presentations were given by several members of the First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana and MCC Great Lakes Peace and Justice coordinator Jorge Vielman, who have witnessed the direct impact that U.S. military spending has had in Colombia, Guatemala and Central America and the advocacy they’ve done in response.

To close the workshop, Lyndaker Schlabach led a discussion and activity aimed at providing tools and tactics for advocacy, including writing emails and letters to legislators, making phone calls to

congressional offices, writing letters to the editor, utilizing social media to connect with legislators, and meeting in person with legislators.

Lyndaker Schlabach emphasized the importance of individual acts of advocacy in bringing about legislative change.

In the Saturday evening service, Lyndaker Schlabach spoke on Living Faithfully in the Empire.

“We must care for our own souls. Through prayer we need to seek the heart of God, remembering that God is a God of peace. Inner peace will enable us to work for outward peace,” she said.

Lyndaker Schlabach brought the morning message on Sunday, focusing on the theme from the book of Esther that perhaps we may be here “for such a time as this.”

She told of the impact that letters, and contacts made to our government officials have on important issues. The guidelines for doing this are: Speak with humility, prayer and fasting, respect and accountability, and not getting caught up in partisanship; we need to remember that we can do the seed planting work, feed and water, but God makes it grow.

Lyndaker Schlabach met with the Junior High Youth and sponsors on Sunday evening for a meal and focus on military recruitment.

Using the momentum gained from the weekend, several participants, accompanied by Lyndaker Schlabach, made a legislative visit to Illinois senator, Dick Durban’s office, asking for his efforts to decrease military spending in the U.S. budget.



Bible to second graders

Second graders received Bibles at a service on Sept. 30 at Atlanta Fellowship.

James Rissler, pastor, (center), and Lesley Ediger, (far right), interpreting, with second graders, from left to right, Andrew, Megan, Javy, Teo, Gabriel, Nissy and Ryan.

Guest speakers visit Emmaus congregation this fall

This fall, Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship has had the benefit of seminars, discussion groups and sermons led by Mennonite scholars, professors, retired professors and pastors.

On Sept. 30, Gerald Mast, professor at Bluffton University, delivered the sermon and introduced his book, "Go to Church, Change the World." This book has also been resource material for study groups in the congregation.

On Oct. 28, Don Blosser, retired Goshen College professor and pastor, led a discussion, brought the sermon and introduced the congregation to his new book, "Pastor and Professor."

J. Denny Weaver led a seminar on Saturday Nov. 3, on "The Non-Violent Redemption," which is also the title of his recently revised book. On Sunday morning Nov. 5, he led the discussion hour and brought the sermon.

On Nov. 11, Loren Johns, professor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, led a discussion hour and brought the morning sermon.

"We are grateful for the insights these spiritual leaders bring to supplement the inspirational messages brought by Anita Rediger, our pastor," said Howard Baumgartner.

In October, the congregation became mindful that it was five years ago that meetings began to explore the possibility of a new fellowship of Anabaptist believers in Berne.

This group became the seed for Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship, which is now a member of the Central District Conference.



J. Denny Weaver, second from right, was one of this fall's visiting speakers.

All Saints' Day observed at Shalom

Members of the Shalom, Harrisonburg, congregation, held a time to light candles to remember those who have died this past year and before. The observance was during All Saints' Day Sunday.

Members were invited to place an item representing a loved one who died this past year on the front table where candles were lit.



Keith Suter



Katrina Goering



Carrie Nelson

CDC calendar

2012-13 Regional Gatherings

Jan. 12 - Michiana at Hively, Elkhart

Jan. 26 - Central Illinois at First, Urbana

Feb. 9 - Chicago/Wisconsin at Madison

Feb. 23 - East Ohio at First, Sugarcreek

March 16 - West Ohio at Trenton

First four months CDC giving report

Giving to Central District Conference in the first four months of our fiscal year totaled \$58,892 while the plan approved in June called for giving of \$63,333 by this time of the year. Miscellaneous income and earned revenues were a bit better than planned, so the total revenue shortfall against the plan was only \$2,997. While less than our goal, revenue has remained steady and for that we are very grateful. Total expenses for the conference in these four months were \$61,816 and planned total expenses for the end of October was \$63,818, so we are \$2,002 to the "good" on the expense side. All of this means that through the end of October, we are only \$995 behind our target for this date. For the conference to meet our commitments, we depend on individuals and businesses to give in addition to the congregational support. Please consider making a gift to CDC prior to Dec. 31.

- Roger A. Nafziger, CDC Treasurer

Three CDC members in Mennonite Voluntary Service

Three Central District Conference young adults are in Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) assignments this year.

Katrina Goering is a program organizer with BorderLinks in Tucson, Ariz. She is a 2012 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University and is a member of Columbus Mennonite.

Carrie Nelson is a home repair worker with Community Home Repair Program of Arizona in Tucson. She is a 2012 graduate of Truman State University and is a member of First, Champaign-Urbana.

Keith Suter is an administrative and legal intern with Catholic Charities DC in Washington, D.C. He is a 2012 Bluffton University graduate and member of Grace, Pandora.

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